

From: steve
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Greetings All,

As someone who personally experienced Microsoft's casual dismissal of customer bug concerns regarding their Foxpro 2.0 databases in 1994 I find this all deeply unsettling.

The specific incident I refer to is a classic example of MS inaction. Microsoft knowingly shipped its initial Foxpro in a state that caused it to eat its database when one tried to exercise preventative maintenance during a re-index. This sounds minor until you realize that they encouraged the use of the database nationally by the United Way, and in the process the United Way lost their donor data DBs. Casual estimates are that the United Ways lost over 70 million in contributions in that year due to this. There is no way to measure the amount of suffering that remained unaddressed due to MS's callousness. Microsoft not only encouraged software they knew was broken to be used, but also refused to provide any fix for the bugs in a timely fashion. In conversations with their technical support, the United Way vendor for whom I worked, Hewitt-Anderson, was told not only that they had no fix, but had no plans to release any fix until the next version of Foxpro, which had no planned release date. Cold comfort for hundreds of United Way branches.

The company feels that it is too powerful and pervasively deployed to need to respond in any way to problems it creates, or to even create products would survive in a true market environment.

The only real fix to break that power down to the point to where Microsoft feels that quality software and addressing customer concerns are once again important for its survival.

The settlement is a waste of the taxpayer money and civil servant effort put into the case thus far. It fails to address the illegal restrictive agreements forced onto OEMs that was the heart of the actual Netscape case. It fails to address the OS information shared only with internal programmers (an extremely underhanded and amusing unsuccessful attempt to make up for the fact that non-microsoft programmers were consistently producing leaner faster applications). It fails to address the predatory pricing practices that unfairly restrict consumer purchasing choice by punishing those who don't promise to purchase only the MS software.

It fails to address that Microsoft's lack of concern has created National security problems in systems deployed by the government...Are we going to

point to your settlement as a point when the government had a chance and failed to prevent a possible cyber pearl harbor?

The current settlement is only in the interest of the Microsoft management and lawyer teams. Ultimately even their employees, as US citizens, will suffer from the issues arising from the lack of due diligence to product quality and security that it luxuriates in as a monopoly.

Don't give up the good fight!

-=Steve